SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 37

Vancouver metro

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015 High 4°C/Low 1°C Scattered showers

The *Heart* of Christmas

You don't have to be religious to understand the true meaning of the holidays. It's really just about good manners. Merry Christmas from everyone at Metro. XO!

Heartfelt advice from our etiquette expert Ellen Vanstone

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 24, 2015

Happy holidays!
Metro is not publishing on Christmas Day, but look for our special Time Capsule edition on Dec. 28. We resume normal publication on Jan. 4.

‘Finally, finally I am free,’ cries Salvadoran asylum seeker

JOSE FIGUEROA

Immigration minister John McCallum intervenes

Jose Figueroa stands outside Walnut Grove Lutheran Church with his family, from left, Esmeralda, Ruby, Jose and wife Ivania in Langley, B.C. Wednesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

He first put one toe out the door, then backed up a few steps and, finally, Jose Figueroa lunged forward with both feet through the front entrance of the church that had protected him from deportation for the last two years.

The asylum seeker from El Salvador sobbed joyously in the embrace of his wife and then pumped his fists in victory outside Walnut Grove Lutheran Church in Langley, B.C.

“Finally, finally I am free,” he exclaimed on Wednesday to cheers by dozens of supporters who wept along with the man before spontaneously launching into a round of Happy Birthday.

Figueroa left the church sanctuary on his 49th birthday after gaining an exemption on Monday to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds from Immigration Minister John McCallum.

In July 2014, he won a judicial review from Federal Court that ordered his case be examined again by immigration officials. But it wasn’t until the new Liberal minister intervened this month that he was granted freedom.

Figueroa was declared inadmissible to Canada in May 2010, despite having lived in B.C. with his family since 1997. An arrest warrant was issued by the Canada Border Services Agency in October 2013, prompting him to take sanctuary.

Standing outside the church on Wednesday, Figueroa beamed and spun around to nod at the cross atop the building. He then addressed members of the congregation that have supported him throughout his ordeal.

“This is a big experience that needs to be shared, not only with you guys but with all of Canada,” said Figueroa, who was wearing a red T-shirt emblazoned with a large maple leaf.

“Canada has to recover the place that we always had. It’s a country that shows compassion and that compassion has to be shown to everyone, no matter where they are coming from.”

He said his first plan upon leaving would be to pay a surprise visit to Rodney Watson, a former American soldier who took sanctuary in a Vancouver church six years ago.

Figueroa said he wanted to bring hope to Watson, who was ordered deported in 2009 and is facing military imprisonment for refusing a second deployment to Iraq as a war resister.

He then gestured to a stoic mother and her two red-eyed teenage sons, who were standing just behind him inside the sliding door enclosure of the church. The Juhasz family from Hungary took refuge in the same church in December 2014 and have yet to resolve their status.

“Let’s everyone gather together and find a solution for them as well,” Figueroa implored.

Figueroa must now complete the process to get his permanent residency documents, a task his former lawyer Peter Edelmann expects to go smoothly. He said the case was “absurd” from the beginning.

“Unfortunately what’s happened ... is you have (immigration) officers who’ve been given a big hammer. They run around and everything starts to look like a nail. Jose got caught up in that,” he said in an interview.

“He was a student organizer for a broad-based civil rights movement in a country that was in the throes of a very, very brutal dictatorship.”

Figueroa, a father of three, plans to study for the LSAT law exam and hopes to gain expertise to help other refugees.

> **“This is a big experience that needs to be shared.”**
> Jose Figueroa

His 18-year-old son, who has autism, said he hopes his dad will use his spare time to play video games with him. He also wants his dad to teach him how to drive.

“Life was hard when I didn’t have my dad to support me,” Jose Jr. said in an interview. “Deep down I just love him.

Figueroa and his wife escaped to Canada in 1997 after he received death threats in El Salvador. He had supported a popular resistance against a U.S.-backed military regime that terrorized the people during a civil war in the 1980s.

He was denied asylum by federal immigration officials who decided his membership in the rebel group, called the FMLN, had links to terrorism. A Federal Court judge called that decision “unreasonable” and found he was a non-combatant political activist trying to motivate university students to achieve democratic reform.

El Salvador voted the FMLN into power in 2009 and it has diplomatic relations with Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IRAQ WAR

U.S. army deserter patiently keeps up his fight for asylum

Rodney Watson
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

An American soldier living in the sanctuary of Vancouver’s First United Church says he’s happy for Jose Figueroa, even if his own fight for asylum continues after more than seven years.

Rodney Watson, who deserted the U.S. army and fled to Canada in 2006 to avoid another tour in Iraq because of his objections to the war, is getting ready to spend his seventh Christmas in a row at the Downtown Eastside church, where he has been living in sanctuary since 2009.

In that time, he befriended Figueroa, who himself has been trying to avoid deportation to El Salvador and took up sanctuary in Langley’s Walnut Grove Lutheran Church for two years until finally being granted asylum by Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government this week.

Former political activist Figueroa — who moved to B.C. in 1997 but was found inadmissible in 2010 — said his first act as a free man would be to visit Watson.

> **“All I’m asking for (Justin) Trudeau, is ‘Don’t forget what your dad did with Vietnam resisters.’ He was a shining example.”**
> Rodney Watson

Watson can’t wait to catch up.

“We last saw each other about a month or two before he went into sanctuary,” said Watson, who has a seven-year-old son.

“Because of his situation, he was thinking about taking sanctuary so he came to meet me. We talked. He’s a good guy, really friendly and a kind person; a person I think could add to Canadian society.”

The two have stayed in close contact since.

“I kind of felt like, maybe, I inspired him to take the same action for his family and I’m glad that he did and now he’s free,” Watson said. “I’m not jealous, I’m happy for him.”

Figueroa’s case has also renewed hope that the change in government in Ottawa could mean Watson’s own case for asylum can finally move forward.

“I salute Justin Trudeau and the immigration minister for doing the right thing,” he said. “When (Stephen) Harper was in power, I felt I was in limbo. All I’m asking for Trudeau is, ‘Don’t forget about me. Don’t forget what your dad (former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau) did with Vietnam resisters. He was a shining example, be that shining example for this generation.”

Vancouver's Christmas wish

WASTE

City hoping residents will try to lessen landfill load

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

All the City of Vancouver wants for Christmas is for everyone to cut back on waste.

The city issued a bulletin Wednesday gently reminding people to try to keep waste out of the landfill as they shop for feasts and gifts over the next week.

"Create memories, not garbage," the bulletin states.

The nudge comes as the city endeavours to meet high environmental standards under its greenest city goals. Its so-called "zero" waste goal aims to reduce the annual solid waste that heads to the landfill or incinerator to 240,000 tonnes by 2020 from a baseline of 480,000 tonnes in 2008.

Residents have already made major strides to achieving that goal, with the total waste heading to the dump down to 394,600 tonnes as of 2014, according to a staff report.

Skaters take in the fun at the Robson Square ice rink on Wednesday. People can cut back on waste this holiday season by giving experiential gifts. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Banning organics from the garbage, a policy enacted in 2015, was responsible for much of the reduction. The vast majority (93 per cent) of city-serviced multi-unit residential buildings made the switch to the green bin program.

An expansion of the city's recycling program — it now accepts Tetra Paks, dessert containers and single-use coffee and tea pods — also helped cut back on waste.

But the city hopes to take it even further, especially when it comes to the construction industry. Metro Vancouver is set to implement a clean wood waste disposal ban at its transfer stations and landfill, a policy expected to divert 15,000 tonnes of wood from the trash annually.

The city asks people do their part and passed on the following tips.

At the grocery store, make a list to avoid purchasing unneeded items, buy local ingredients, bring reusable shopping bags, eat your leftovers and recycle food scraps — including soiled paper napkins — in the green bin.

At the shopping centre, look for gifts that last and plan to use reusable wrapping material (a scarf or a gift bag). Even better, give an experience.

394,600

The number of tonnes of garbage produced by Vancouverites that went to the landfill in 2014.

ROAD SAFETY

Two injured in head-on crash involving bus

Two people are in hospital following a head-on collision involving a packed charter coach that temporarily shut down a bustling coastal highway in British Columbia.

Squamish RCMP spokeswoman Sgt. Jolaine Percival said both the operator of a Pacific Coach Lines bus and the driver of a Jeep were seriously injured when the vehicles collided along the Sea-to-Sky Highway, between Vancouver and Whistler, Wednesday morning.

The coach operator was airlifted to hospital, while the other driver was taken away in an ambulance.

There were about 50 passengers on the bus at the time, none of whom were injured in the crash, said Percival.

The bus came to rest atop a concrete barrier after colliding with the Jeep that appears to have crossed the centre line, said the Mounties in a statement.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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In our sleepwear departments. See below for exclusions.

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Ski hills put on white coat

RECREATION

Two recent big snowfalls have operators in a great mood

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver-area ski hill operators are expecting a bustling holiday season on the slopes.

Compared to last year's dreadful ski season — where local hills were forced to call it quits before the winter was up — Cypress Mountain spokesman Joffrey Koeman said this year's season has started early and shown no signs of slowing down next week.

The mountain received close to 30 centimetres of new snow Tuesday night, which added to the snowfall of more than 50 just a couple days before.

Every downhill run at the North Shore mountain is fully open.

"It's probably the best start that we've ever had," Koeman told Metro. "It's really rare before Christmas that you're 100 per cent open. (After last season), this feels a lot more normal."

Koeman said the resort always sees an influx of people flock to the hills after Christmas. With all the runs open, the crowd will spread out.

Cypress Mountain has had some exceptional early-season ski days, like this one on Dec. 16. JESSICA LYNN PAYNE/CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

> **It's probably the best start that we've ever had.**
> Joffrey Koeman
> of Cypress Mountain

A fresh blanket of snow also means first-time skiers and snowboards will experience a slightly less painful introduction to the sport.

"It's a lot softer," he joked.

As of Wednesday, both Mount Seymour and Grouse Mountain also had 25 runs in operation.

Koeman said the rest of the winter is forecast to be an El Nino year, which could mean roughly 10 per cent less snow than usual.

Even that projection won't be "a catastrophe", he said, and does nothing to dampen a strong start to the season so far.

IN BRIEF

Threat at airport involves U.S. Homeland Security

Threats directed toward Vancouver International Airport earlier this week now involve the Homeland Security Unit of the Philadelphia Police Department.

RCMP said on Monday they had received a threat via the social media platform Twitter, although the incident didn't have any impact on operations at the airport.

Officers from the department's technological crimes unit and the airport's police detachment began working with colleagues from the United States.

Once investigators zeroed in on Philadelphia, they contacted the department's homeland security team for help.

RCMP Cpl. Dennis Hwang says a 16-year-old male youth is under investigation.

Hwang wouldn't disclose the nature of the threats, but says they were found to be not credible.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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COMMUNITY

Hockey goes on for Glen thanks to police, retailer

A six-year-old boy in Richmond will be able to continue playing hockey thanks to the generosity of an RCMP officer.

The boy, Glen Chen, lost all of his hockey equipment — which was originally donated to him by the Richmond Minor Hockey Association — during a residential break-in on Oct. 26.

Upset that Chen's hockey dreams had been dashed by the crime, Const. Gurch Bharaj replaced some of the hockey equipment out of his own pocket and enlisted the help of Ironwood Plaza's Canadian Tire to donate the rest of the gear.

Richmond RCMP spokesman Cpl. Dennis Hwang said the story resonated within the detachment, leading it to share the story publicly despite Bharaj's humble nature.

"(Const. Bharaj) did a little kid a solid," said Hwang. "There's plenty of good that goes on in the world and sometimes it's nice to highlight that."

The investigation into the break-in is ongoing, according to Hwang.

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Glen Chen, 6, received new hockey equipment from Richmond RCMP and Canadian Tire after his original, donated gear was stolen in a break-in. CONTRIBUTED/RICHMOND RCMP

> **Const. Bharaj did a little kid a solid. There's plenty of good that goes on in the world and sometimes it's nice to highlight that.** Richmond RCMP Cpl. Dennis Hwang

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*Select items. While quantities last. Valid December 26, 2015.

Countdown on for NYE party

CELEBRATION

City to hold event after nearly a decade

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Stop whining about No Fun City and get ready to ring in 2016 with fun-loving west coasters of all ages.

After years of unsuccessful attempts to get an event up and running, Vancouverites will finally have a place to watch fireworks and countdown to the New Year at a free, public, city-sanctioned, family-friendly New Year's Eve bash at Canada Place on Dec. 31.

"It's been a lot of work, so we're excited that its only eight sleeps away," NYE Celebration Society spokesman Charles Gauthier said Wednesday. "I'm optimistic we'll make it an annual tradition."

It's been more than a decade since Vancouver held an official street party on New Year's Eve. Demand for such an event has always been high, but it's a challenging event to organize since risky weather has traditionally made it difficult to find sponsors.

Fireworks over English Bay seen from a West End apartment building. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

> **I'm optimistic we'll make it an annual tradition.**
> Charles Gauthier

The society came close to pulling off a party last year, but didn't raise enough money so was forced to cancel it a few months prior.

"We were so far behind the 8 ball," said Gauthier, who also runs the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association.

"We could have done an event scaled down considerably last year, but we decided not to proceed and do something that was half-baked."

This year, though, the society raised north of $300,000 to host the party, buoyed by a $125,000 grant from the City of Vancouver. (Council unanimously approved the funding.)

"It was really gratifying to see sponsors come on board quickly," Gauthier said.

The 1,100 tickets to the premium viewing area (they cost between $40 and $55) sold out in only two weeks.

Gauthier expects at least 15,000 people will attend.

He repeatedly emphasized that the event is family friendly and aims to be inclusive for all ages, much like the Celebration of Lights or Canada Day festivities. Security plans are in place, however, in case the crowd behaves badly.

"This is not the only party in town. There are other options for people who want to have an event that includes alcohol," Gauthier said.

Gauthier suggests arriving early, dressing for the weather and taking transit, which will be free starting at 5 p.m. and run throughout the night.

The event begins at 6 p.m. and features a variety of performances from indie bands including Bed of Stars, the Matinee, Dear Rouge, We Are The City and Current Swell. Food trucks will be serving fare throughout the night.

For those with little ones, there will be a three-minute fireworks show at 9 p.m.

COMPLAINT

Man accuses Strata council of discrimination

A Richmond man has filed a human rights complaint alleging his strata council's decision to conduct meetings in Mandarin amounts to discrimination.

Andreas Kargut says he filed the complaint as a last resort after the council informed residents that all meetings would be conducted in Mandarin, instead of English, for reasons of efficiency. Minutes and all other documents are translated to English, but Kargut — who served on the strata council from 2003 to 2014 — says refusal to conduct the meetings in English discriminates against some residents. No laws require English to be used at strata meetings and Mandarin is spoken by as many as 70 per cent of those living in the complex, which borders Vancouver International Airport. Kargut says the strata council has ignored a recommendation to hire an independent translator for all meetings, and instead hired a translator that he alleges was unable to handle the task. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOUR: METRO CHATS WITH REFUGEES IN VANCOUVER

Caring Somali has a busy life

IMMIGRATION

Energetic Yasin Mussa, 21, works and volunteers

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Yasin Mussa meets Metro in Gastown during a gap in his hectic schedule. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Yasin Mussa is a busy, busy man.

He works at a Coquitlam steel company, sits on the City of Surrey's local immigration partnership, volunteers with a handful of organizations including the Immigrant Services Society of B.C. and lives in Surrey with his family — his mother and three school-aged siblings.

But what's particularly remarkable about Mussa is that he is doing all of this despite not finishing high school, because of a clerical error when he came to Canada from Somalia via Eritrea as a refugee on June 8, 2010.

Mussa, now 21, squeezed in a meeting with Metro on a Sunday afternoon after he volunteered to take a non-English speaker to the airport and help her navigate through YVR during the holiday rush.

His journey from Somalia began in 2003, when he, his brother and two sisters travelled to Eritrea to be with their mother, who had left home a year before to seek medication for a severe problem with her leg.

Eritrea was safer than Somalia — "Life was OK, we were protected by the United Nations" — but his mother didn't get any resolution for her medical problems.

Their family eventually was offered a spot in Canada and jumped at the opportunity. He recalls landing at the airport, not speaking English and with no idea where to go.

"It was horrifying," he said. "The hard part in this country is if you don't speak English, you're not going anywhere."

His fear dissipated somewhat when a volunteer for ISS of B.C. picked them up at the airport and took them to the Welcome House, where they stayed for 15 days before the volunteer helped them find an apartment.

> **Helping people is my thing because I didn't get the help I needed when I came to Canada. I want to make sure that doesn't happen to another person.**
> Yasin Mussa

But that was just the beginning of Mussa's struggle to get an education.

When his family was interviewed to come to Canada, officials erred when they wrote down his birthday. They said he was born on Jan. 1, 1991, when in fact, he was born on Oct. 23, 1994. (They changed his entire family's birthdays to Jan. 1, which Mussa finds comical.)

He tried to persuade the government to correct his age, but bureaucrats ignored his pleas and refused to let him attend high school because he was allegedly 19.

So at 15, off he went to an adult learning school to try to learn English. Not surprisingly, he struggled.

The next year, his dad was finally able to send his birth certificate from Somalia.

When a Surrey school teacher saw it, they let him go to Panorama Ridge High School for a year while he appealed to Canadian authorities to fix his documents.

He loved Grade 10, made lots of friends and learned how to speak English like he was born in Canada.

But a year later, the government refused to change his age. His birth certificate, purportedly signed by the mayor of Mogadishu, wasn't accepted because he was born in a year where Somalia had no official government.

Mussa was no longer allowed to attend school so, at the ripe old age of 16, he went to work. Still, he wanted to volunteer in the community. He was selected to be on the City of Surrey's immigration advisory committee.

He studied on his own to get Canadian citizenship and passed the test on his first try six months ago. He has since travelled to Seattle and next year hopes to visit Somalia, where his father still lives.

Mussa's goals are to move to Alberta to get a higher paying job — he's thinking Edmonton, optimistic he'll adapt although he's not thrilled by the prospect of -27 C weather — and to save enough money to privately sponsor his father.

Meantime, he volunteers to help newcomers at ISS of B.C. and at Surrey Memorial Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital.

"Wherever I can actually get a chance to volunteer, you know, I do it whenever it's possible," he said. "Helping people is my thing because I didn't get the help I needed when I came to Canada. I want to make sure that doesn't happen to another person."

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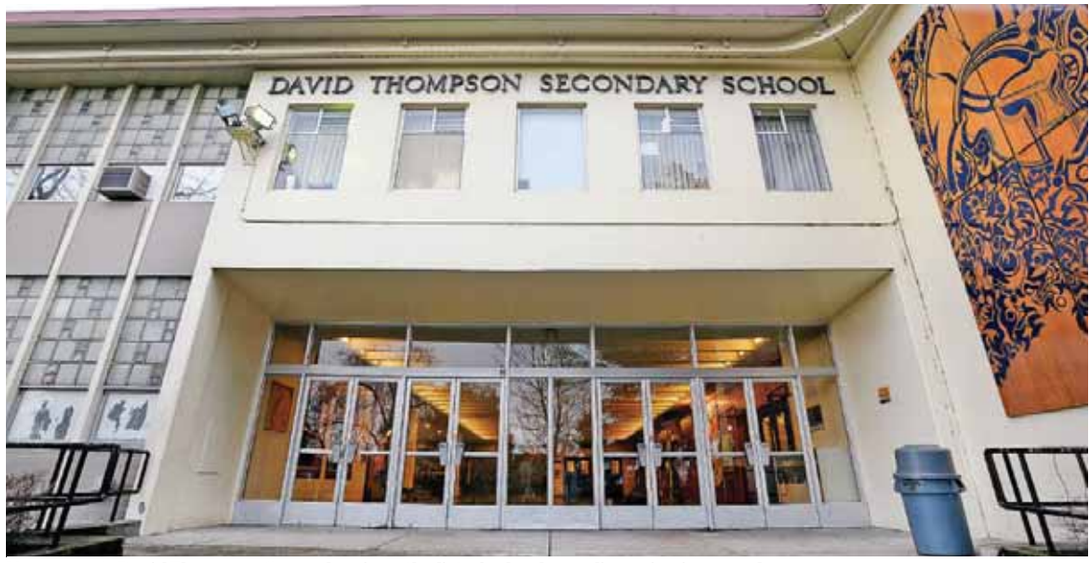
Seismic plan extension denied

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Over 50 schools will receive upgrades over the next decade

Tereza Verenca
Metro | Vancouver



Vancouver's David Thompson Secondary is on the list of schools needing seismic upgrades. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

The chair of the Vancouver School Board says he's disappointed the Ministry of Education won't grant an extension for staff to submit their seismic upgrade plan.

Mike Lombardi told Metro the school board received a letter from the province in early December, requesting the plan be filed by the end of next month. The original deadline was June 30, 2015, but that date was pushed to January after VSB asked for an extension to complete public consultations. The school board then asked for a June 16, 2016 deadline, but it was denied.

"We were on track to have the report in by June (2016), which we thought was fine with the ministry. The ministry keeps changing the rules on us and that's unfortunate," Lombardi said. "The important thing is to have the consultation with the community because this lays out our plans for the next decade in terms of our capital projects and our seismic upgrades."

To meet the January deadline, staff will be submitting an interim plan — which is about 60 per cent complete — and will update it later in the year after public consultations are held from February to June. A full schedule will be released at a later date.

More than 50 schools will receive seismic upgrades over the next decade, according to the board chair, with 20 currently in the planning or construction phase and another 32 in line.

"That's about a billion dollars worth of funding when it's all put together," said Lombardi.

> **The ministry keeps changing the rules on us.**
> Mike Lombardi

The province originally committed to upgrading all schools by 2020, but then rescheduled it for 2030.

Lombardi added had the ministry not "continually changed its rules," the school board would have been able to get things done faster.

"At one time, you were able to make a decision on a replacement school or a seismic upgrade depending on how close the costs are. Now, it's shipped to the cheapest cost possible. You go in and do seismic upgrades and you don't get money to replace things like the boiler and the heating system, which is unfortunate," he said.

Despite the time crunch to get the seismic upgrade plan in, Lombardi said staff will "make it happen."

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TRANSLINK

Provider fumes at pot-law limbo

MEDICINAL MARIJUANA

Police still enforcing laws against sale of cannabis

Rose Miranda volunteers at the Phoenix Pain Management Society. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **I love Baby Trudeau but he says, 'We're going to fix this.' When? Meanwhile, I have clients who don't have their medication.**
> Rose Miranda

While Rose Miranda waits for her April court date to face potential charges of possession for the purpose of trafficking, the 65-year-old retired education assistant can't take cannabis for her arthritis.

Mounties have also banned her from visiting or contacting anyone at Phoenix Pain Management Society, the medical marijuana dispensary where she was volunteering when she was arrested in Nanaimo.

"I love Baby Trudeau, but he says, 'We're going to fix this.' When? Meanwhile, I have clients who don't have their medication," Miranda said.

"I take care of people who are housebound, people in wheelchairs and people who are poor. They need their medication and right now they can't access it."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has vowed to legalize and regulate marijuana but no timeline is in sight. Meanwhile, cannabis-related crimes continue to tie up police and court resources, leaving some feeling they're in legal limbo.

Miranda began using medical marijuana about two years ago, after she said prescription drugs turned her brain into "mush." She began volunteering at Phoenix, primarily to educate seniors about cannabis as a pain-relief option.

Nanaimo RCMP raided three dispensaries, including Phoenix, on Dec. 1. Selling pot over the counter, whether medical or recreational, remains illegal in Canada. Mounties sent warning letters weeks before executing search warrants.

"They came in like a SWAT team, guns out, 'Hands up!,' screaming, yelling, terrifying everybody who was in there," said Miranda.

She said police body-searched everyone, including an elderly volunteer with a cane, before handcuffing them and taking them to jail. There, she said, she sat in a freezing cell wearing only a cotton shirt and pants for more than 10 hours.

Two days later, she said, she wound up in hospital with chest pains.

Const. Gary O'Brien of the Nanaimo RCMP said he couldn't comment directly on any dispensaries that were raided, but officers acted professionally at all times.

"I believe most of the scenes were videotaped, so if there's any evidence our police officers were (heavy-handed), that will certainly come out," he said.

O'Brien said there is evidence that some stores were selling to minors but he could not say which ones and the investigations are ongoing.

The RCMP's raids on B.C.'s pot shops are unusual. But across Canada, charges for cannabis possession remain relatively common and have increased over the past decade.

Last year, 24,542 people were charged with marijuana possession, up from 18,953 in 2004. Charges for the crime hit a peak in 2011, with 27,997 people charged.

Simon Fraser University criminologist Neil Boyd found in a 2013 study that the Vancouver police rarely recommended charging individuals for cannabis possession as a singular offence, while the RCMP was mostly responsible for a twofold increase in charges over a decade in B.C.

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NARCOTICS

Fentanyl kills four within 24 hours, Vancouver police say

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver police are warning all drug users after a string of overdoses resulted in four deaths in less than 24 hours.

A 24-year-old downtown man, 35-year-old East Vancouver man and a mid-20s Downtown Eastside woman died overnight, according to a Wednesday news release from Vancouver police spokesman Const. Brian Montague.

A fourth man in his 50s died later in the afternoon of a suspected overdose.

Their deaths are on top of 17 non-fatal overdoses that resulted in multiple hospitalizations between Dec. 19 and Dec. 22.

Police say the warning is related to concerns over stolen fentanyl patches and counterfeit Percocets. It's targeted at both seasoned and recreational drug users.

21
Number of known fentanyl overdoses in Vancouver between Dec. 19 and Dec. 23.

Numerous drugs were found at the scenes of the deaths. Samples have been sent to Health Canada for analysis, but investigators expect to find fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic drug that is up to 100 times more toxic than other opioids such as morphine. It is often cut into other illicit drugs including heroin, cocaine and oxycodone. Dosage must be carefully monitored to avoid overdose. Signs of a fentanyl overdose include severe sleepiness, slow heartbeat, trouble breathing, shallow breathing or snoring, clammy skin and trouble walking or talking.

Police advise drug users never to take drugs alone and ask people to call 911 immediately if someone has these symptoms after taking illicit drugs.

Visit knowyoursource.ca for more information on the dangers of fentanyl.

IN BRIEF

Teen snowboarder found dead on Mount Washington

A teenaged snowboarder was found dead on Mount Washington following a search-and-rescue operation Tuesday, the BC Coroners Service has confirmed.

Search-and-rescue volunteers were dispatched shortly after 5 p.m. on Tuesday, after the 15-year-old male snowboarder was reported missing when he did not meet up with his party at the base of the mountain as planned.

The Coroners Service stated that the teen was not out of bounds. Rescue crews on snowmobiles located him at about 11 p.m., but he was deceased.

The RCMP and coroner were returning to the site Wednesday to examine the scene in daylight conditions.

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This is how we roll (sushi), Vancouver

FOOD PREPARATION

Chef's tour shows fans of all ages how to prepare the local favourite

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

The hands of experienced sushi chef Takayuki Omi delicately roll the edible seaweed, otherwise known as nori, while the ingredients such as rice, smoked salmon and cucumber perfectly align into place.

It may not be messy and bulky like a hamburger. It might not have the sexy sizzle synonymous with a steak. But inside these neatly wrapped delicacies is a burst of harmonious taste that people from different walks of life all around Vancouver have come to love.

Sushi remains intensely popular in Metro Vancouver.

Part of the reason why, Omi says, is because many of the ingredients — most notably salmon and other local fish — can be found, caught and processed locally.

"Especially in Vancouver, totally different from any other city," said Omi. "People know sushi. People love sushi. And then people invent different Vancouver sushi."

The years of practice and repetition Omi possesses make the practice of hand-rolled sushi look so easy, yet so precise. With ease, he demonstrates the technique to a group of people participating in an "Anyone Can Make Sushi" event at the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre in Burnaby.

To the more than two dozen focused onlookers directly in front of him during one afternoon class — children, young couples, moms and dads, and adults of varying ages — the steadiness of the craft takes a little more getting used to and there's only a short amount of time to get the technique down.

But one by one, the group begins to confidently create sushi masterpieces — rolled in a fashion to appear more like a waffle cone instead of the typical circular style you might see in restaurants.

The classes were part of a seminar on Japanese culture and food preparation, put on in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for Japan's global tour of food education events.

This particular event was the only one scheduled for Vancouver.

Other cities throughout the world — Barcelona, Copenhagen, Kuala Lumpur and Seattle — were also listed as tour cities.

"I love it. It was so much fun," said Charissa Leddy, who admittedly goes for sushi typically two times a week.

Others taking the class, like Akeiko Rawn, have made hand-rolled sushi before. But it allowed for them to hone their skills while learning from such an experienced sushi chef, and in Rawn's case, allowed her to explore her interest in learning the more traditional ways of her culture.

Teaching others how to make their own hand-rolled sushi, and about Japanese culture, is a rewarding experience for Omi. He was born in Tokyo, graduated from culinary school in Japan and was a sushi chef in Toronto for 15 years before he moved to Vancouver in 2011.

"It's so unbelievable. Sometimes, kids sushi classes, sometimes the youngest is four years old," said Omi, now the sushi chef at the Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel in Vancouver.

"It makes me so happy."

Sushi chef Takayuki Omi shows how to roll sushi during an Anyone Can Make Sushi event at the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre in Burnaby. CAM TUCKER/METRO

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Refugee deadline approaches

IMMIGRATION

8,000 Syrians in eight days needed to meet federal target

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

Min. John McCallum says the government will have identified the 10,000 refugees who will be on Canadian soil in the coming months. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

While many Canadians will soon be sleeping with visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads, hundreds of public servants are working around the clock in pursuit of the federal government's goal to bring 10,000 Syrian refugees here by Dec. 31.

More than 500 public servants — the bulk of them at Canadian government refugee processing centres in Amman, Jordan and Beirut, Lebanon — are working to identify, interview, screen and process the refugees before sending them on government flights bound for Toronto and Montreal.

"The people in the field are working incredibly hard and they've improved their techniques," Immigration Minister John McCallum said Wednesday, back from a visit to Jordan and Lebanon.

"This is something totally new. We've never done anything like this in our history at such speed," he added. "They are doing it as quickly as possible and over the days they are learning to do it smarter and more effectively."

Many of the staff are Canadian Forces members there to help with medical screening and gathering biometric data, such as fingerprints, McCallum said. The two processing centres are now "powerful machines," especially on the medical screening front. Officials are processing 800 medical cases per day in Amman and Beirut combined, McCallum said.

Many staff are immigration department officials who are interviewing resettlement candidates. There are also Canada Border Services Agency officials, foreign affairs representatives, and embassy staff.

Many public servants have relocated from other posts abroad, McCallum said.

"I met people who have come literally from all over the world — from New York, from Hong Kong, from Mexico — to relocate temporarily in this region to help out on this process," he said.

According to the latest federal government numbers, by Wednesday night the government will have resettled 2,167 Syrian refugees in Canada since Nov. 4. Another 19,510 refugee resettlement applications are in progress.

McCallum said the government's goal is still to bring 10,000 refugees to Canada by the end of the year, but he couldn't guarantee it because there were only eight more days to bring some 8,000 refugees into the country.

He said the government will have granted permanent residency to 10,000 refugees, but didn't guarantee that they will all be on Canadian soil by year's end.

However, he said he's "very confident" the government will reach its ultimate goal of bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees here by the end of February.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

OBSTACLES

'Moving heaven and earth'

The federal government may not meet its goal of bringing 10,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of the year, Immigration Minister John McCallum said Wednesday.

"That certainly remains our target, we are working day and night to achieve it. But there are certain factors outside our control," McCallum told reporters during a briefing on the Syrian refugee effort.

Those factors include the weather, and refugees' potential unwillingness to leave on very short notice, McCallum said.

As of Monday, 1,869 Syrian refugees had arrived in Canada since Nov. 4. Another 300 were due to arrive in Montreal Wednesday evening. That means nearly 1,000 refugees per day would need to arrive in Canada between now and Dec. 31 to meet the government's target.

"We are moving heaven and earth to get them here as quickly as we can but to do it in a way that is correct and appropriate and takes due concern for security, medical and other issues," McCallum said. MICHAEL WOODS/METRO

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

'Good memories' held at village that said no to residential school

No, they said.

When officials came to collect children from Jean Marie River for residential school, residents of the remote village in the Northwest Territories said they'd keep their kids at home.

In what may have been unique among First Nations, they decided to build their own school. And now, as Canadians grapple with the legacy of residential schools, Jean Marie River is trying to commemorate the fact it doesn't have to. "Our community saw that it needed to do something different," said Chief Gladys Norwegian. "It was democracy at its finest."

Jean Marie River had about 70 people in 1950. That's about the same as now, but there were many more children back then.

That's what brought the government to town. Officials explained that kids would have to attend a residential school at Fort Simpson — a long journey by boat or dog team.

Norwegian's father Louis, who was chief, was torn.

"Dad really stressed on the importance of our beliefs and values," she recalled. "At the same time, (he) realized there's a dominant society out there, so he really believed we needed to know the ways of the white people for us to survive."

It was the mothers that made up his mind. "When he heard the mothers crying, echoing through the community ... he himself cried," said Norwegian. "To me, that was the driving force."

The chief began talking to officials about Jean Marie River getting its own school. But the options were residential schools or day schools attached to a hostel where kids could grab a few days worth of lessons while their parents were in the area to trade.

Not good enough, thought the chief. He had logs shipped and men pitched in and put up a schoolhouse. He made a deal with an anthropologists June Helm and Teresa Carterette, who were looking for a northern community to study.

Books and school materials were shipped from Alberta. Eventually, teachers came, too.

"It gave us a good, solid base as compared to people that went to residential schools that didn't have a nurturing mother, that didn't have a model of how to become a caring mother," Gladys Norwegian said.

"I think it helped me to become comfortable with who I am. I didn't really need to explain to anybody what being an aboriginal person means. I was comfortable in my skin."

"I just remember it with good memories," said Marilyn Hardisty, 61. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chief Louis Norwegian in 1952. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

> **I didn't really need to explain to anybody what being an aboriginal person mean. I was comfortable in my skin.**
>
> Marilyn Hardisty

Tracking Santa gets technical

CHRISTMAS EVE

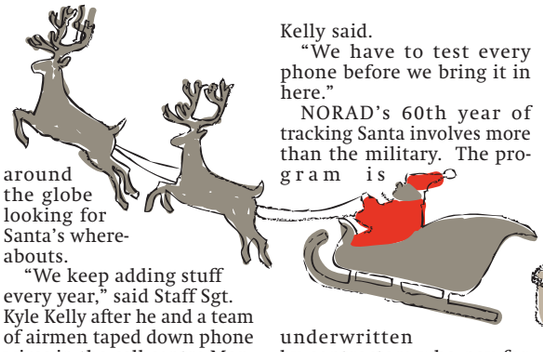
Hundreds of volunteers set to keep watch across globe

Peterson Air Force base is getting ready for its annual holiday mission — tracking Santa's storybook sleigh ride around the world.

The North American Aerospace Defence Command has been working for weeks to tackle the one-day mission.

Miles of wire, dozens of computers and 157 telephone lines will greet hundreds of volunteers Thursday, The Colorado Springs Gazette reported.

Volunteers will be answering calls from an estimated 125,000 children around the globe looking for Santa's whereabouts.



"We keep adding stuff every year," said Staff Sgt. Kyle Kelly after he and a team of airmen taped down phone wires in the call centre Monday.

The call centre in a training building will be staffed for 23 hours and Christmas Eve. Volunteers will also share Santa's location on Facebook and Twitter. Last year, Santa got 1.6 million Facebook likes.

"We start in November," Kelly said.

"We have to test every phone before we bring it in here."

NORAD's 60th year of tracking Santa involves more than the military. The program is underwritten by contractors who pay for the phones, the computers and the website.

First lady Michelle Obama is expected to volunteer, with calls forwarded to her on Christmas Eve.

Volunteers will field a growing number of calls from curious kids from outside the United States.

"We get a lot of calls from Europe, Australia and New Zealand," said NORAD's Stacey Knott, who has organized the Santa tracking for three years.

Bilingual volunteers handle the foreign-language inquiries.

On the bilingual front, NORAD, a partnership between the U.S. and Canada, has a distinct advantage.

"The great thing about having Canadian forces here is they can speak in French," Canadian Maj. Jennifer Stadnyk said.

NORAD is responsible for defending the skies and monitoring the sea approaches for both nations.

Its control room was originally inside Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado Springs in a shelter designed to withstand a nuclear attack. The control room is now at Peterson Air Force Base, also in Colorado Springs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDRES PLANA

"The great thing about having Canadian forces here is they can speak in French."
Canadian Maj. Jennifer Stadnyk

NEW JERSEY

Panic over Elf on Shelf

AMAZON.COM

A New Jersey girl called 911 after she touched her Elf on the Shelf.

Police say seven-year-old Isabelle LaPeruta of Old Bridge was worried because, according to the popular children's book, the magic of Christmas goes away if the elf is touched.

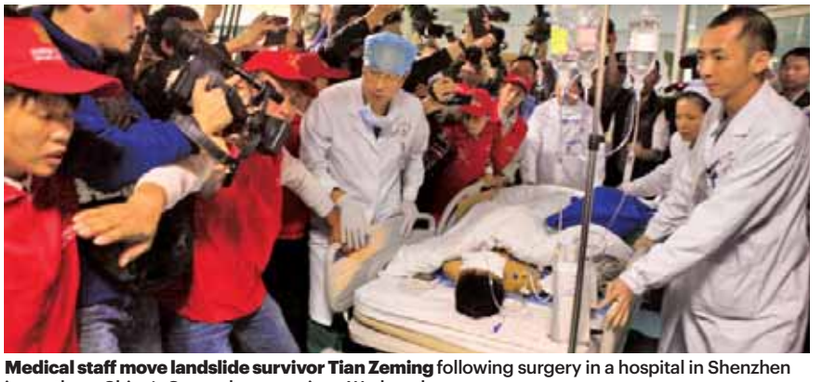
WNBC-TV reports the girl told the 911 operator not to come to her house because she had meant to call her dad.

However, police are required to check 911 calls and an officer found the child in tears.

Her mother, Lynanne, says she awoke from a nap to find her daughter trying to shoo an officer out of the house. She says the girl panicked after the elf fell on the floor when she threw a ball.

The officer radioed headquarters: "Isabella apologized. She touched the Elf on a Shelf. She won't call 911 again."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Medical staff move landslide survivor Tian Zeming following surgery in a hospital in Shenzhen in southern China's Guangdong province Wednesday. CHINATOPIX/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHINA

Door traps man into survival

Squeezed into a narrow room under piles of debris for 67 hours, a young man was saved by a door that trapped his foot but gave him space to survive. Rescuers on Wednesday pulled him from the massive mudslide that hit part of a major manufacturing city in southern China.

In a feeble voice migrant worker Tian Zeming, 21, told rescuers his name and that another person was buried near him, according to authorities. But medical and rescue staff who went down into the rubble found the second person had not survived.

More than 70 people are still missing after the mountain of construction waste material and mud collapsed at midday Sunday and flowed into an industrial park in Shenzhen.

Zhang Hu, a city vice mayor, told a news conference that four bodies had been found. He said that even though the critical 72-hour period to find survivors had passed, they were continuing rescue efforts with a team of 5,000.

"As long as there is a sliver of hope, we will never give up," Zhang said.

State broadcaster CCTV reported that Tian underwent surgery for a broken hand and on his foot, which had been wedged against a door panel. It said he had been trying to get out of his room when the building collapsed, and the door panel created a space for him to survive.

Hospital boss Wang Guangming said Tian was in stable condition, but extremely weak, dehydrated and with several soft tissue injuries and multiple fractures.

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"As long as there is a sliver of hope, we will never give up."
Shenzhen vice mayor Zhang Hu

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CHRISTMAS IN FRANCE
FEAR MIXED WITH CHEER
French police and a soldier patrol near a Santa Claus model in Nice, southeastern France, Wednesday.

France's interior minister says the government will tighten security around Christmas, amid continued concerns about potential extremist violence after deadly attacks last month.

LIONEL CIRONNEAU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

We are very popular: Junta

GOVERNMENT

Thailand's military rulers say poll shows 99% rating

It's the kind of poll result you'd see in a North Korean election or Saddam Hussein's Iraq: Thailand's military-ruled government says 99 per cent of the country's people are happy with its performance since it took power in a coup last year.

The junta has relentlessly pursued critics, jailing them for attempting to stage protests, lighting candles or even hitting the "like" button on Facebook, yet says the poll released Tuesday shows an astonishing majority of Thais are satisfied with its performance.

The survey conducted by the government-run National Statistical Organization found that 98.9 per cent of respondents were satisfied and confident in the government's performance, said government spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd.

He did not disclose the margin of error of the survey, but said 2,700 people nationwide were polled from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4.

However, the number of respondents and dates they were polled varied depending on the government source.

Deputy government spokesman Werachon Sukondhapatipak said over 7,000 people were polled earlier in December. The statistics office that conducted the poll said 3,900 people were surveyed from Nov. 2 to 10 — and that 98.6 per cent. There was no immediate explanation for the confusion over the sample size and results.

The Southeast Asian country has been deeply divided along political lines for a decade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MUSICAL COUP FOR THE CHIEF

PM Prayuth Chan-ocha
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Harmony through music
Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, the temperamental but tuneful head of Thailand's military junta, has written a song as a present to his fellow citizens.

He said his new song, Because You Are Thailand, is an appeal to all Thais to join with him in overcoming the crisis that besets Thailand.

It was an apparent reference to divisions that caused sometimes-violent political conflicts over the past decade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS

Protest hits mall in Midwest

Arrests were made at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport on Wednesday as protesters blocked roads and caused significant traffic delays after they moved from a rally that briefly shut down the Mall of America.

A rally at the mall was organized by Black Lives Matter activists to bring attention to the police shooting of Jamal Clark, a black man in Minneapolis. The protesters want video released.

Gov. Mark Dayton said he urged protesters to stop blocking access to part of the airport. He said releasing video of officers' altercation with Clark could jeopardize investigations.

About 500 protesters initially gathered at the Mall of America early Wednesday afternoon. The mall sought a court order blocking the planned protest. A judge on Tuesday barred three organizers from attending the demonstration, but didn't have the power to block unidentified protesters associated with Black Lives Matter from showing up.

Kandace Montgomery, one of three organizers, said the group wasn't deterred by the ban. Montgomery said the retail mecca was the perfect venue for their demonstration to pressure authorities involved in the investigation of Clark's death to release video footage.

"When you disrupt their flow of capital ... they actually start paying attention," she said.

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Police arrest one of the 500 protesters. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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BRITAIN

Muslim family's U.S. visit nixed

British Prime Minister David Cameron will probe claims that U.S. officials prevented a British Muslim family of 11 from flying to Disneyland for a holiday.

The issue is sensitive because U.S. Republican presidential contender Donald Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslims visiting the U.S.

Stella Creasy, a member of the opposition Labour Party, said U.S. officials gave no explanation for refusing to allow her constituents to board a flight from Gatwick Airport on Dec. 15, so she wrote Cameron seeking his intervention. She said there is "growing fear" among British Muslims that Trump's plans are coming into practice even though they have been widely condemned.

A top Muslim group said cases like this appear to be related to religion and are worrying for British Muslims.

> **We were the only family that was of ... Muslim, sort of appearance.**
> Mohammed Zahid Mahmood

Mohammed Zahid Mahmood said he and his family — two brothers and their nine children — were told nothing except that they were not allowed to travel to the U.S. despite having previously obtained clearance.

"We were the only family that was of Asian, Muslim, sort of appearance, and it seemed a little bit embarrassing that only we were taken out (of the line to board)," he told the BBC.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ONLINE SECURITY HELLO KITTY FIRM SAYS LEAK PLUGGED Tourists ride on a sightseeing bus painted with a Hello Kitty character in Tokyo. Sanrio Co., the Japanese company that owns the Hello Kitty brand, said it has fixed a security leak on the SanrioTown.com fan site that compromised the personal information of 3.3 million users, including 186,261 minors. The leak was discovered on Saturday by a security researcher. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

SHOPPING

Apps, services cater to tardy shoppers

Procrastinators, rejoice. This year there are more apps and services than ever before to help last-minute shoppers.

Apps like Curbside deliver orders directly to the trunk of your car, more retailers are offering incentives to buy online and pick up in store, and Amazon Prime Now and other same-day delivery services have vastly expanded this year.

Retailers are adding incentives so more people choose "buy online, pick up in store" options. Macy's offered a $10 e-gift card on a purchase of $50 or more when an online order is picked up in store via coupon aggregator RetailMeNot. The option lets retailers save on expedited shipping costs and cuts down time for last-minute shoppers.

RetailMeNot's mobile app lets shoppers take advantage of last-minute deals in store too. The app uses a combination of GPS and Wi-Fi signals to pull deals from stores you are in or nearby when you opt in.

Those seeking deals on same-day delivery will find them, too. Shopify, which provides merchants with online checkout services, said its retailers were partnering with Uber to provide free same-day delivery.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

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Trying to be the Uber of mining

INDUSTRY

Abitibi CEO wants to pull stodgy sector into new age

At 31, Ian Ball became one of the youngest mining company presidents on Bay Street at McEwen Mining, which operates in four countries. His boss was none other than legendary gold mining magnate Rob McEwen.

A year after being promoted to the top spot, Ball called up the CEO of Abitibi Royalties (Glenn Mullan) "and told him I wanted to replace him," jokes Ball. Today, at 34, Ball has that CEO job and is implementing the innovative ideas that got him there.

Last summer, under Ball's leadership, Abitibi launched "The Royalty Search", an online platform where struggling exploration companies and prospectors can submit a property for consideration to have their annual staking costs or property taxes paid for in exchange for a royalty.

Knowing that the mining industry works slowly as it moves from discovery to excavation, Ball insists the sector needs to refine its business model.

"Look at Uber and Airbnb," he says. "They both support market valuations equal or larger than the world's largest gold miners, but don't own anything. … At their heart, they are royalty companies getting a percentage of a sale. How do you bring that to mining?"

Ball figures his company's approach with the royalty search helps junior miners survive the ongoing bear market, and gives them a leg up on much bigger, established competitors in the same game.

"I have very clear goals for myself," says the Bowmanville, Ont., native. "One was to run a gold company, but when I left McEwen Mining I set out to build the best gold company in the world," he says. "That might seem like a boastful statement, but when measured by share price and performance, I don't think it is inconceivable considering the foundation we have at Abitibi Royalties. And I wanted to do something on my own, starting small in order to show people that nothing was given," says Ball. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"Look at Uber and Airbnb … They both support market valuations equal or larger than the world's largest gold miners, but don't own anything.
Ian Ball

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metro VIEWS

Your essential daily news

Thursday, December 24, 2015

Sweetscience
For the perfect Christmas dinner, says Oxford University gastrophysicist Charles Michel, add a dollop of jam to your gravy.

Are you as smart as Metro's favourite feline philosopher?

Our resident snuggly scholar has collected snippets of the best holiday wisdom for you to ponder as you celebrate the season. See how many quips you can match to their authors. And have a meowy Christmas, happy holidays and a healthy and safe new year.

IF ALL THE YEAR WERE PLAYING HOLIDAYS, TO SPORT WOULD BE AS TEDIOUS AS WORK.
1
I FIND CHRISTMAS VERY DIFFICULT.
2
THERE IS NO PLACE MORE DELIGHTFUL THAN ONE'S OWN FIRESIDE.
6
A PERPETUAL HOLIDAY IS A GOOD DEFINITION OF HELL.
4
LET'S BE NAUGHTY AND SAVE SANTA THE TRIP.
3
REMEMBER THIS DECEMBER, THAT LOVE WEIGHS MORE THAN GOLD.
5
WIKIQUOTE
SHAKESPEARE
MORRISSEY
JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM BACON
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
GARY ALLEN
CICERO
HAVE A VERY THOUGHTFUL HOLIDAY FROM PHILOSOPHER CAT and METRO

Answers

1. Shakespeare
2. Morrissey
3. Gary Allen
4. George Bernard Shaw
5. Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon
6. Cicero

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URBAN ETIQUETTE **ELLEN VANSTONE**

There you have it, folks: the biggest gift of all. The golden rule that JC expounded during his all-too-brief career as a motivational speaker and Messiah: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

You may or may not believe in Jesus Christ, but it's hard to argue the man didn't pull off one major miracle: He used a rudimentary form of social media that involved a scattered entourage jotting down tweets on vellum, but more than 2,000 years after his death, his birthday is still an event of global significance.

Admittedly, the manner in which his followers now celebrate the day might give him pause. Overspending on toys and gadgets. Committing the sin of gluttony for days on end. Pretending a fat guy from the North Pole uses levitating caribou to carry out billions of B&E's in one night via outdated home-heating systems. It's a strange way to honour the life of a poverty-stricken prophet who preached love and humility.

But far be it from me to judge.

Because God knows I'd hate to be judged.

And there you have it, folks: the biggest gift of all. The golden rule that JC expounded during his all-too-brief career as a public motivational speaker and Messiah: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Which is pretty much what I've been saying for almost a year in this etiquette column. Not that I'm comparing myself to Jesus Christ. Obviously, that is not for me to say.

What I am saying is that the spirit of Christmas is based on the same principle that is at the core of good manners, i.e., putting the comfort and concerns of others ahead of your own.

These kinds of manners have nothing to do with etiquette per se — it's not about which fork to use with the escargots or how to address a peer should you be invited to brunch with the House of Lords. Those kinds of rules are too often used by the privileged (a.k.a. lucky) to make "lesser" folk feel bad and excluded, which is the opposite of good manners.

What I'm talking about is the kinds of impeccably good manners that are based in love — love for thy neighbours, love for thine own sense of being a decent, moral person.

What could be simpler, right? Be nice to everybody while everybody is also nice to you. If we all embraced it for just one single day, we'd instantly have another miracle: world peace. Good lord, it's so easy a child could understand it!

And yet … It's so hard! (And believe me, it's twice as hard for someone who writes a national etiquette column. The pressure in my personal life not to be a total jerk is considerable.)

It's also hard to buy into the baby-Jesus-peace-and-love message of Christmas when we're drowning in a sea of insidiously sentimental, tinsel-laden, bank-breaking exhortations to buy, buy, buy. Not to mention the stress of pretending to get along with everyone in your crazy family over turkey. Not to also mention the stress of desperately missing your crazy family should you find yourself separated from them this year.

The spirit of Christmas is based on the same principle that is at the core of good manners.

So allow me to suggest a gift-giving idea that anyone can afford, and is firmly on message with the season.

Why not give the gift of good manners, all year long?

Help wrangle a stroller onto the streetcar even when you're frantically late. Be more patient with frazzled store clerks, harried servers and amateur pedestrians who clog up sidewalks or stop dead at the tops of escalators. Talk to the oldest, loneliest person in the room at a party full of otherwise sexy, powerful dynamos. Listen — really listen — to the most annoying relative in your family. Drop your indifference to a neighbour/partner/co-worker you take utterly for granted, and let what they want and feel actually register in some non-judgmental corner of your brain (it may take some looking, but you'll find it).

I guarantee these small but genuinely heroic efforts will bring you a little closer to the peaceful, loving world we all crave, whether you're religious or not.

Good luck.

And Merry Christmas from everyone at Metro!

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metro WEEKEND
Your essential daily news
MOVIES GOSSIP TELEVISION BOOKS

Poulter 'pushed to the brink'

INTERVIEW

The Revenant actor finds chaos of shoot rewarding

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

British actor Will Poulter portrays legendary mountain man Jim Bridger in the epic frontier adventure The Revenant. CONTRIBUTED

Stories about The Revenant's rough and tumble shoot have already passed into legend. Harsh filming conditions — it was minus 40 degrees with windchill factor for much of the Alberta shoot — turned the outdoor revenge drama into what one crew member called "a living hell."

One of the film's stars says he was "confused and stressed" during the shoot, but wouldn't have had it any other way.

"It is something that I am only able to analyze and realize in hindsight," says English actor Will Poulter. "I spent the entire experience peppered with these moments of total confusion and emotional stress; in a turmoil. Now I realize that is what I needed to experience. I wouldn't have ever wanted to really gain control because then I wouldn't have been experiencing anything realistic or wouldn't have captured anything we needed. I'm glad for those moments."

The 22-year-old, hot off the success of The Maze Runner and We're the Millers, appears alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy in the gritty vengeance drama about fur trapper Hugh Glass, a frontiersman who became a legend when he trekked across harsh country after being left for dead following a brutal bear attack. Poulter plays Jim Bridger, an inexperienced fur trapper caught in an impossible situation — torn between loyalty to Glass, his responsibility to his employers and his moral obligations.

> **It's an exploration of how much we can take as humans and what motivates us to endure these kinds of conditions.**
> Will Poulter on his latest film The Revenant

"On many occasions (director) Alejandro (Iñárritu) let me be because I was naturally confused and stressed by being pulled in many directions and not knowing what to do. He often thought the most appropriate thing to do was to allow me to be that. I would turn to him and say, 'I don't know what to do here,' and he would say, 'Why are we even having this conversation?' The character doesn't know what's going on, so why should I?"

The Revenant is the cinema of misery: a primal story that puts its characters through their paces.

"I think this movie is about the human spirit and I think what Alejandro strove to achieve was a film that explored what humans are able to endure and what is worth enduring in this kind of experience. Is it family? Is it money? Is it simply the will to live another day in an environment you love and feel safe in? It's an exploration of how much we can take as humans and what motivates us to endure these kinds of conditions."

Poulter says The Revenant is "an emotionally affecting experience," and adds, "there was no creating that without experiencing a lot of the hardships for real." The gruelling outdoor shoot took place on 12 different locations in three different countries including Canada, United States and Argentina from October 2014 to August 2015. Thinking about the shoot Poulter remembers the hard times with pride.

"The moments that stick out most for me are those moments where I felt I was pushed to the brink emotionally and physically but achieving the shot or getting the take. Ending the day was just unbelievable. There are a few of those days that stick out in my mind and that's why it was so rewarding. It's one thing to finish a hard day's (work) and pat one another on the back. It's another thing to finish a day you didn't actually think you could get through and then pat each other on the back."

MARKETING

A trailer for the trailer: Advertising a year before the release

The anti-hero adventure film Suicide Squad isn't due out until August 2016, but fans already have a taste, thanks to a teaser trailer that debuted in July — while shooting was still underway.

The recently released Star Wars: The Force Awakens also had a teaser trailer out over a year in advance, as does the J. K. Rowling-written Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, due out next November.

Distributors have been posting teaser trailers well ahead of a film's release for over a decade, with 2003's The Da Vinci Code cited as a trailblazer. But experts say it's now become more commonplace, and in some cases, the teasers now have their own teasers.

It's a way of creating early awareness in the increasingly congested entertainment world, making the trailer more important than ever.

"When you're up against Marvel movies and Disney movies and these movies with the Happy Meals in your face, it's harder for independent films to dance between the raindrop and find those eyeballs," says Elevation Pictures co-president Laurie May.

> **It's harder for independent films to dance between the raindrop and find those eyeballs.**
> Elevation Pictures co-president Laurie May

"So the more you can start to create the awareness, I think the better."

Traditional marketing of a big film used to be based on a tightly controlled strategy that included on-set media junkets and trailers to get the word out.

Now, actors, directors and on-set photographers can post their own material on social media in real-time during production, easily and relatively cheaply.

"The social media strategy is now an inherent part of virtually every single film that gets made," says Piers Handling, director and CEO of the Toronto International Film Festival.

But for all the buzz social media can provide in the promotion of a film, the trailer still remains tops.

"In terms of marketing materials or any sort of interaction with the marketing of a movie or a TV show, the trailer is still the No. 1 most effective piece of content that goes out," says D'nae Kingsley, chief strategy officer for Trailer Park, a Hollywood-based entertainment and content marketing agency.

Smaller Canadian films don't often get teaser trailers, but Elevation made it happen for writer-director Paul Gross' Hyena Road. A teaser for the Afghan war drama came out nearly a year before it hit theatres in October, followed by a second trailer closer to theatrical release.

"This one we needed to breed the awareness of it early and just keep it in everyone's mind," says Gross, noting its release date coincided with the busy Thanksgiving weekend.

Those who make trailers say the basic approach remains the same: they have to be compelling and leave an impression.

But the creative touches in them are ever-evolving.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Director wondered if Leo could grow a beard

FILMMAKING

Real facial hair essential to lead role in The Revenant

Alejandro González Iñárritu, left, directs Leonardo DiCaprio in The Revenant. CONTRIBUTED

Alejandro G. Inarritu knew Leonardo DiCaprio would go to the ends of the earth to make the 19th century survival epic The Revenant exactly as the famously meticulous director wanted.

For Inarritu, DiCaprio was the best person to play Hugh Glass, a real-life fur trapper who survived a bear mauling and then went to find his mates who left him for dead in the unforgiving wilderness. Over the course of the nearly yearlong production, the Oscar-nominated actor and environmentalist proved his commitment over and over. He ate raw bison. He stripped naked in sub-zero temperatures. He even jumped into an icy river. But, early on, Inarritu had one very specific worry: Could DiCaprio grow a beard?

"You cannot shoot this film with a fake beard. It would look terrible," Inarritu said in a recent interview. "Not every man grows so much hair in his face. That was a bet."

Thankfully for the director, DiCaprio sprouted a gnarly, unruly beard that becomes a symbol of where exactly his character is on his journey, and how deeply he's devolved. Makeup added dirt on a daily basis, and a combination of glycerin and grit gave his hair that unwashed, bloody look — the look of someone who'd survived a bear attack.

It's a minor thing, and perhaps the easiest test DiCaprio had to endure to make the sprawling epic, but it's one of those details that illustrate the overall production's commitment to authenticity.

SUFFERING FOR HIS ART
LEONARDO DICAPRIO ATE RAW BISON. HE STRIPPED NAKED IN SUB-ZERO TEMPERATURES. HE EVEN JUMPED INTO AN ICY RIVER.

"It's a really primal story of man and the natural world," said DiCaprio in a recent phone interview. "It's almost biblical."

In an era of computer generated imagery and other post-production fixes, this was an unconventional shoot from the outset. Inarritu travelled with his crew to Calgary, Alberta and then to Argentina when the Canadian snow melted earlier than expected. As if shooting on location isn't hard enough, he and cinematographer Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki also opted to shoot only in natural light, giving the production a mere 90 minutes a day to achieve complex, highly choreographed long takes. The duo had done this before in Birdman, but never in the unpredictable wilderness.

But DiCaprio knew very well what he was signing up for.

"When you're out in the elements like this — and there are people who have much harder jobs than people making a movie — but you just appreciate the endurance of man and how we're able to adapt to circumstances," DiCaprio said. "You're signing on to find elements that will ultimately transform the narrative and find the poetry. ... It was all basically us really putting ourselves in this environment and seeing what happens."

Partly by nature of the story and partly for the sake of his character, DiCaprio largely isolated himself from the rest of the cast, including his friend Tom Hardy.

He studied the life of Hugh Glass and the lives of fur trappers at the time. He learned and practiced the choreography for the shots, too. But when it came time for the cameras to roll, everything became very animalistic — a largely silent performance rooted in instinct and reaction.

"For me it was about really thinking these thoughts and really trying to feel this man's pain," DiCaprio said.

"Leo thinks like a filmmaker more than an actor," Inarritu said. "He understands the whole. He was able to be not only a machine doing exactly what we agreed in a natural way but at the same time be absolutely present to react to any improvisation. That's when I felt that this is one of the greatest actors."

Little remains of DiCaprio's full mountain man transformation externally. Production wrapped. He shed the beard. The bumps and bruises healed. But the grit of the shoot, the trials and tribulations, the tension of getting that perfect shot, it's all left on the screen — particularly in the bear attack.

"I think it will go down in history as one of the most voyeuristic action sequences ever created," DiCaprio said. "You feel the blood and the sweat. You almost smell the bear. It accomplishes what movies do at their best which is to really make you feel like the rest of the world has evaporated and you're singularly in that moment."

Inarritu wants to keep the specifics of how exactly he achieved such a harrowing sequence to himself. Revealing the process would destroy the magic of it all, he said.

"I wanted for people (to) feel the cold, smell the fear," he said. "It was difficult but that's what we were supposed to do. Nobody should care. Nobody should be bothered with having a good time or not. That's not the purpose of doing a film."

"Judging by the results I would not change a bit."

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7 WAYS JUDD APATOW FIXED FUNNY

Judd Apatow is a millennial Renaissance man. As the director of movies like The 40-Year-Old Virgin and Knocked Up and the producer of such flicks as Superbad, Pineapple Express (above) and Anchorman, Apatow has used his voice to champion a new kind of storytelling in comedy. Here's how:

1. He launched the raunchy comedy. Hollywood execs in the 1990s kept most comedies broad — PG-13 fare aimed at teenage boys. The 40-Year-Old Virgin (2005) was an R-rated film that explored awkward middle age. And we were all the richer for it.

2. He built a bridge between the '90s and today. Apatow got his start working with Garry Shandling, Jim Carrey, Adam Sandler and Ben Stiller — stars that defined 1990s comedy.

3. He rejected the star system. In his own productions, Apatow is known for taking chances with unknown or under-appreciated talents, such as Seth Rogen, Melissa McCarthy and Steve Carell. After working with Carell on Anchorman (2004), he encouraged the Daily Show alumnus to write the story for The 40-Year-Old Virgin.

4. He plays well with others. Apatow encourages collaborative filmmaking, such as on-set improv, which in turn leads to some of the funniest outtakes in the biz.

5. He's a friend to the underdog. Apatow loves subcultures. From the sleepy stoners being chased by drug lords in Pineapple Express to the awkward high-school seniors facing separation anxiety in Superbad, he shows that even losers get lucky sometimes.

6. That's because the journey is half of the fun. In the Apatow-verse, side chatter and witty wordplay get as much airtime as action scenes and gags. It makes relationships between characters feel more real.

7. He knows women are funny. Apatow has provided a platform for strong female performers such as Catherine Keener in The 40-Year-Old Virgin and Leslie Mann in Funny People. He's also nurtured Lena Dunham (Girls), Amy Schumer (Trainwreck) and Kristen Wiig, who co-wrote one of his biggest hits, Bridesmaids.

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The Hateful Eight

Director: Quentin Tarantino
Starring: Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell

Set after the Civil War, a stagecoach hurtles through the wintry Wyoming landscape. The passengers, bounty hunter John Ruth and his fugitive Daisy Domergue, race towards the town of Red Rock.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 85% Audience: + 98%

DRAMA

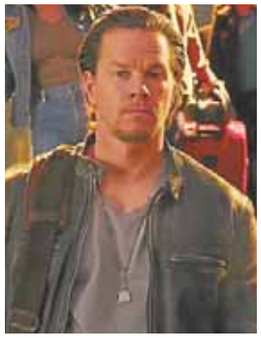
Concussion

Director: Peter Landesman
Starring: Will Smith, Gugu Mbatha-Raw

This dramatic thriller is based on the incredible true David vs. Goliath story of Dr. Bennet Omalu, the brilliant forensic neuropathologist who made the first discovery of CTE, and a sports-related brain trauma in a pro player who fought for the truth to be known.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 58% Audience: + 95%



COMEDY

Daddy's Home

Director: Sean Anders
Starring: Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg

A mild-mannered radio executive strives to become the best stepdad to his wife's two children, but complications ensue when their freewheeling and freeloading real father arrives, forcing him to compete for the affection of the kids.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 32% Audience: + 96%

DRAMA

Joy

Director: David O. Russell
Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Robert DeNiro

This is the wild story of a family across four generations centered on the girl who becomes the woman who founds a business dynasty and becomes a matriarch in her own right.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 63% Audience: + 96%

DRAMA/ROMANCE

Carol

Director: Todd Haynes
Starring: Cate Blanchett, Kyle Chandler

A young woman in her 20s, Therese Belivet is a clerk working in a Manhattan department store and dreaming of a more fulfilling life when she meets Carol, an alluring woman trapped in a loveless, convenient marriage.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 94% Audience: 82%

DRAMA/COMEDY

Sisters

Director: Jason Moore
Starring: Tina Fey, Amy Poehler

Two disconnected sisters are summoned home to clean out their childhood bedroom before their parents sell the family house. Looking to recapture their glory days, they throw one final high-school-style party for their classmates,

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 89% Audience: + 96%

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Telefilm so lame you can't even hate-watch

THE SHOW: A Christmas Melody (W/Hallmark)
THE MOMENT: The feel-bad point

Mariah Carey in A Christmas Melody. CONTRIBUTED

Melissa (Mariah Carey), the self-proclaimed "go-to mom for everyone in Silver Falls, Ohio," stands in the wings during an elementary school holiday pageant. She's wearing a snow-white cardigan and pearls. Her high ponytail and makeup are red-carpet-ready. Consumed with jealousy, she stares at someone on stage: the nine-year-old daughter of Kristen (Lacey Chabert).

Kristen was Melissa's arch-rival in high school, and she's recently moved back to town. Before the pageant, Kristen tut-tutted to Melissa, "Someone would have to be heartless to want to upstage a nine-year-old." As Carey tries valiantly to knit her brow we realize, someone is.

Can anyone feel good watching alleged-feel-good holiday telefilms like this one? If so, how?

Budget constraints force their actors to be driving through sunny October leaves one minute and pulling up in "snowy" December Ohio the next. Their dialogue is full of cheesy clunkers like, "You're this amazing wedding dress designer for Butler's department store!" and "You're never too old to believe in Christmas wishes." People must be hate-watching, right? Right???

I tried to liven things up by inventing a drinking game: If Carey ever changed position in her scenes, I would drink. But I stayed thirsty, because in every one, she stood stock-still and recited her dialog without even moving her head.

And when they referred to Kristen and Melissa's high school graduation in 1998 — even though Chabert was born in 1982 and Carey in 1970 — well, it just became a feel-sad movie, and I went to bed.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

HOLIDAY VIEWING

Perfectly sized binge watches

It's the holiday season and for many of us who have just a few days off, time is of the essence. Here are five top-shelf shows you can start and finish before you're back to work in 2016:

Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock. CONTRIBUTED

Sherlock

Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman are perfectly cast as Sherlock Holmes and sidekick Dr. Watson. Each of the three seasons currently available on Netflix have three episodes apiece, each no longer than 90 minutes. You can easily devour all of them in time to catch the newest episode, The Abominable Bride, premiering on PBS on New Year's Day. And prepare for a fourth season scheduled to air in 2017.

Peaky Blinders

This British production — starring Cillian Murphy, Sam Neill and Tom Hardy — is set in post-First-World-War Birmingham, England. It centres on the ambitions of a gangster family and a vicious police officer (Neill) bent on their destruction. With only six episodes in its first two seasons, the series will have you begging for more — and you'll be thankful a third season began filming in October.

F is for Family

This new animated series on Netflix is the brainchild of star standup comedian Bill Burr. It's a ribald look at a 1970s-era family that evokes elements of All in the Family and King of the Hill and adds liberal doses of expletives. And because the first season has only six half-hour episodes, it's almost a teaser for future seasons.

The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst

This six-episode true crime documentary first aired in February. Filmmaker Andrew Jarecki became intimately familiar with a notorious multimillionaire and New York City real estate heir, and by the time the series ends your jaw will be taking up temporary residence on the floor. Thehorrors inside Durst's mind will resonate in yours long after you've finished watching.

Black Mirror

If you're looking only to be cheery during the holidays, this BBC-produced show isn't for you. But if you're looking for a fascinating, disturbing, brilliant anthology series touching on technology, the future, satire and humanity's dark places, Black Mirror is right up your alley. Once you're done, you'll understand why Netflix has commissioned a third season (of 12 episodes!). There's nothing like it.

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Mary-Louise Parker writes about men

DEAR MR. YOU

Actress submitted collection anonymously

The latest round of raves for Mary-Louise Parker is not for her acting, but for her writing.

Parker's Dear Mr. You, a collection of lyrical and often emotional essays about men addressed to everyone from former (and unnamed) lovers to family members, NASA and a Sept. 11 firefighter, has been highly praised by critics. Essayist Leslie Jamison, memoir writer Mary Karr and poet Kevin Young are among those who have appeared with her during her promotional tour.

Parker is a prize-winning actress who has never wanted to be treated like a celebrity, or like a celebrity author. Dear Mr. You was originally submitted to publishers with her name withheld by literary agent Eric Simonoff, whose clients include Pulitzer Prize-winning fiction writers Jhumpa Lahiri and Edward P. Jones.

"I was immediately intrigued by the prose," said editor Colin Harrison of Scribner, which acquired the book. "It was startling, electric — it beckoned, it provoked, it zapped up the energy level of the reader."

Drinking coffee at a Brooklyn cafe on a warm winter morning, the 51-year-old Parker clearly favours talking about writing over the discussion of acting, or, especially, her personal life. (She lives in Brooklyn with her two children, one of whom she had with the actor Billy Crudup). While a Golden Globe winner for the TV series Weeds and HBO film Angels in America and a Tony winner for Proof, she has for years been contributing essays to Esquire, The Riveter and other magazines.

She is an admirer of poets Mark Strand and Philip Levine among others, and of short story writers Lorrie Moore and Deborah Eisenberg. But highest honours are reserved for her late father, John Morgan Parker, a veteran of World War II and the Korean War who later worked as a bank manager and a justice of the peace among other jobs and took "nearly freakish" pride in his children and grandchildren. In Dear Mr. You, Parker calls him the "wizard of all fathers" and remembers his advice to her soon before his death, in 2010: "Just write, keep writing, promise that you will."

Here are highlights from the interview.

On writing and privacy:
"I am apparently hard to read — not to people I know — but I hear the same comments often through my life. I guess I feel I can't ignore them — 'What are you thinking?' 'Are you upset?' — when I am not upset at all.

"When I do open up, I really open up and am very thorough about what I choose to reveal. ... It also seems very free to know I was the architect of it and I won't be misrepresented. I can be as truthful as I want to be."

On submitting her work to publishers without her name on it:
"I was terrified, but when it seemed like people were favourable toward it I felt validated in a way I hadn't really felt before. ... People get a little more emotional when it comes to actors and this (book) had none of that behind it. I felt almost as if nothing else happened at least I had that moment people found it interesting and valuable."

On a near-death emergency and hospitalization:
"It's not that I saw God, necessarily, but I was in another space. I was not fully conscious. I was hallucinating. I was speaking gibberish. I was in shock, septic shock, and the question is, 'Where do you go? Where does your consciousness go when that happens?'"

On the sense of gratitude in many of her essays:
"When you're reading my book, I'm putting my thoughts in your head and why would I want to put in something negative? Not that there isn't some immense pain ... But I didn't want there to be an indictment of anyone, or try to elicit sympathy for me in any way. It's a bunch of thank-you notes. That's all there is — just a bunch of thank-you notes." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Actress and author Mary-Louise Parker has released Dear Mr. You, essays about men. BEBETO MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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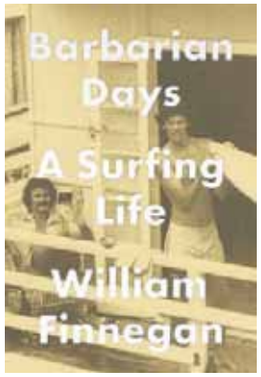
6 BOOKS TO ESCAPE THE HOLIDAYS WITH

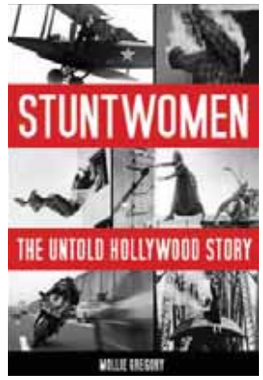
As wonderful as Christmas can be, sometimes we all need a break from the yuletide cheer and books can provide the perfect escape. Here are a few recent titles worth checking out before ringing in 2016.

SUE CARTER/FOR METRO



1 Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life

For those who dream of trading a white Christmas for sand and suntan lotion, William Finnegan's memoir Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life (Penguin) is as close as you'll get without dipping your toes in the ocean. The longtime New Yorker writer shares stories from his life chasing the perfect waves in Hawaii and other exotic locales, providing landlubbers with insider observations of a cultish pursuit mastered by few. It's rare that a sports memoir offers such breathtaking prose.

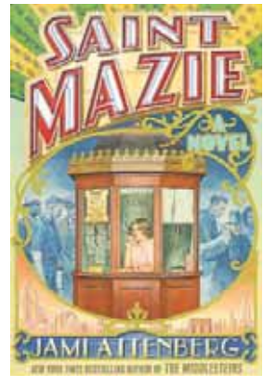


2 Stuntwomen: The Untold Hollywood Story

If surfing doesn't provide enough adrenaline to get you out of the turkey slump, there's Mollie Gregory's Stuntwomen: The Untold Hollywood Story (University Press of Kentucky). Gregory returns to the golden age of film, when women first kicked, leapt and drove their way through silent films. Through 65 interviews with action doubles (including a sister team who have appeared in more than 160 movies), Gregory sheds feminist insight into these unacknowledged kick-butt heroes of cinema.

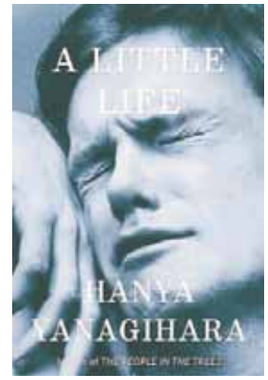
3 Canadian Pacific: The Golden Age of Travel

Anyone who travelled long distance over the holidays can attest to the fact that the experience has lost the glamour of yesteryear. Barry Lane's photo-rich Canadian Pacific: The Golden Age of Travel (Goose Lane Editions) harkens back to when the transcontinental railway and its hotels stood for beauty, adventure and romance.



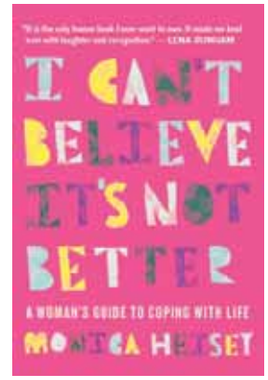
4 Saint Mazie

If you're looking for an escape from your family, spend some time with Jami Attenberg's funny, witty Saint Mazie (Grand Central Publishing). Inspired by the true story of wisecracking Mazie Philips — think Dorothy Parker meets Mother Theresa — Attenberg brings to life the philanthropic theatre ticket-taker who lived in New York during the Depression. No one writes larger-than-life, complicated but ultimately sympathetic female protagonists like Attenberg.



5 A Little Life

Sometimes when it comes to books, bigger is better (it can also signal to others that you're not to be disturbed.) If you're looking for a title with some weight — both in subject and length — there's Marlon James' Man Booker Prize–winning violent epic A Brief History of Seven Killings, about a fictional assassination of Bob Marley; Garth Hallberg's ode to 1970s New York, City on Fire; and Hanya Yanagihara's disturbing A Little Life, which follows the unlikely friendship between four college friends.



6 I Can't Believe it's Not Better

Before making any New Year's resolutions, check out Monica Heisey's funny I Can't Believe it's Not Better: A Woman's Guide to Coping With Life (Red Deer Press). The Toronto comedian and writer eschews the inspirational self-help schlock for solid life advice, like how cry in public and eat in bed (a "Bed Buffet" of pasta or Fruit Loops is best enjoyed with Netflix, wearing a uniform of sweatpants and T-shirt).

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Ski and be seen in style

FASHION

New book celebrates winter cool

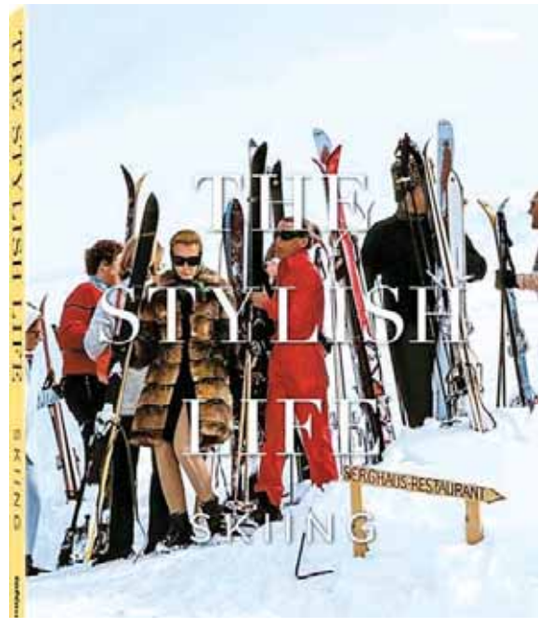
The paparazzi have been following trend-setters, style makers and movers and shakers to the slopes for years now. Where else are those in the limelight going to be able to showcase their style chops in the winter? In The Stylish Life: Skiing, (teNeues) author Gabrielle le Breton takes us on a journey through alpine history and those who helped make it.

The Natural

Shortly after wrapping the 1969 ski drama Downhill Racer, Robert Redford took his love of the sport to the next level by purchasing his own ski resort in Utah. Christened the Sundance Resort, it inspired the name of Redford's famed independent film festival in nearby Park City.

Snow's In

Ski-bunny style has become a permanent trend, from this season's puffer-jacket revival to snowboarder swagger worn as street style to '60s silhouettes, as shown at Moncler's Fall/Winter 2012 show.



The Stylish Life takes us on an alpine fashion journey. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Black Tie In A Whiteout

Artist Janet Hill, of Stratford, created the popular oil-on-canvas series The Kidnapping of Edward Pink which takes our tuxedo-clad hero, a conscripted companion of a mysterious sunglass-wearing brunette, to a tony ski chalet.

Sun and Stars

Sun Valley, the first great American ski resort, was a celebrity destination in its glory days. Ernest Hemingway wrote part of For Whom The Bell Tolls at the lodge in Idaho, though he preferred hunting and fishing to skiing. The resort has since hosted stars including Clint Eastwood, Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Is there an Expendables discount?

Ski Fall

Skiing is a Bond tradition — the super spy has embarked on an alpine adventure in at least one film per decade since the franchise began. In For Your Eyes Only, Roger Moore attempts to dodge the KGB by taking his skis on the bobsled track. Do not try at home (unless you are a double-0 agent, and then by all means).

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gwen Stefani's L.A.M.B. label teamed up with Burton for a collection that incorporated leopard and camo prints, like this Misfit Bomber Jacket ($319.99). CA.BURTON.COM

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5 POP CULTURE MOMENTS THAT MADE HEADLINES IN 2015

The worlds of celebrity and pop culture were filled with attention-grabbing moments over the course of 2015, and sometimes enough similar ones — like when doughnut debacles and bad pics take on a life of their own on the Internet — to constitute a troubling trend. Here's what got our attention this year.

NED EHRBAR METRO IN HOLLYWOOD

1 Justin Bieber makes a comeback

In 2014, Justin Bieber was Canada's most hated export. But this year, a pop-culture miracle occurred and he is back on top thanks to excessively apologizing and releasing some actually very good new music. Joining forces with Skrillex and Diplo, Bieber's song What Do You Mean? debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 — that, in addition to two other songs dominating the charts.

2 Taylor Swift's overstuffed squad

Taylor Swift hit the road this year for her 1989 tour and used it as a chance to prove to the world that she knows a lot — and we mean a lot — of famous people (seen here with Selena Gomez), with cameos onstage by the U.S. women's soccer team, Miranda Lambert and Justin Timberlake to name a few. But she wasn't impossible to say no to. Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellan were able to resist her charms. And honestly, Jennifer Lawrence and Amy Schumer dancing on Billy Joel's piano felt much more organic.

3 Amy Schumer's 'last f-able day'

Leave it to comedy's golden girl to bring together the mega-wattage of Tina Fey and Patricia Arquette to toast Julia Louis-Dreyfus' "last f—able day" in the Season 3 premiere of her Comedy Central show. Not only hilarious by nature, it threw astute shade at Hollywood's wild standards for women "of a certain age." Schumer returned the favour later this year, appearing in Fey and Amy Poehler's Bad Blood parody on Saturday Night Live. Double props.

4 The Ballad of Poot Lovato

As much as Demi Lovato might hate it, the fictitious mutant sister that her family has kept locked in the basement was having a major moment in 2015 — a moment that wouldn't end for the beleaguered singer, with Twitter Q&As and Instagram comment sections continually hijacked by snarky fans concerned about Poot's well-being. You can't fight the Internet, Demi.

5 Ariana Grande's doughnut debacle

One way to help make your bubbly young pop-star self seem more relatable? Showing you like to get stoned and skulk around donut shops, maybe even overstepping your bounds and taste-testing a pastry on the counter, as Ariana Grande did in a great moment caught on camera. Not so helpful? Declaring that you "hate America" after being chastised for your intoxicated behaviour.

OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO BE DONE.

HAPPY JOLLYDAYS

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metro HOME
Your essential daily news

LG's latest smart vacuum doubles as cleaning device and guard dog

NYE bar essentials

I'm sure this far into the holiday season you've seen your share of unorganized bar setups. Don't let your New Year's party be under scrutiny — hire a shirtless bartender and outfit your party with the best bar accessories.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada

1 GLUCKSTEINHOME Trolley Styled Bar Cart
Keep the kitchen island clear and all your bar candy organized. $300, TheBay.com

2 Godinger Hammered Stainless Bar Set
All the materials you will need to show off your mixology skills. $80, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

3 Tom Dixon ARC Corkscrew Pull
Add some designer style to your wine bar. $88, HopsonGrace.com

4 Ralph Lauren 2-Piece Greenwich Double Old-Fashioned Glass Set
A good drink means serving it in a damn-good glass. $95, TheBay.com

5 Carter Muddler
Mash and muddle those garnishes for a truly handmade drink. $18, CrateAndBarrel.com

6 Crabbie's Ginger Beer
Reportedly, a big mainstay for this season's crafty bartenders. $3.60, CrabbiesGingerBeer.com

7 Tartan Crock-Pot Classic Slow Cooker
A great way to keep those hot toddies and ciders warm throughout the party. $28, Walmart.ca

8 Top Shelf Living Set of 9 Whiskey Stones
Let's not water down the issue — no need for ice cubes with these rocks around. $23, Walmart.ca

REAL ESTATE

What they're asking: Homes across Canada for $500K-$600K

What kind of a resale property can you get for $500,000 to $600,000? In this price range, you can certainly still buy a quality home in these cities. Metro looks at a variety of housing types across the country, from pre-construction and resale condos to single-family houses.

OUR CITY

ASKING PRICES WERE ACCURATE AT TIME OF PUBLISHING.

$512,900

Vancouver

Here's a one-bedroom pre-construction condo at 3007-1283 Howe St., at Tate Downtown, in the centre of the downtown south transformation. Designed by award-winning Merrick Architecture, Tate is a new 42-storey landmark just minutes away from the Seawall, Yaletown and the Arts District. The condo boasts city, mountain and water views along with private amenities that include an expansive fitness centre, yoga studio, billiards room and a surround-sound theatre. Completion will be in the first quarter of 2018. Listing agent is Lisa Seto with Regent Park Realty Inc., 604-726-8779.

$509,900

Winnipeg

Here's a condo suite at the exclusive Edgewater building. This corner sixth-floor unit offers city and river views. The kitchen with breakfast bar features espresso-stained maple cabinets, granite counters, tiled backsplash, tiled floors, gas cooktop, built-in oven and microwave, dishwasher and fridge. The master bedroom offers a walk-in closet and four-piece en suite with soaker tub. One parking stall and one storage locker are also offered. Listing agent Natasha Kouk is a sales representative with Royal LePage Dynamic Real Estate, 204-989-5000.

$529,900

Halifax

Located in a family neighbourhood on a prestigious crescent in Clayton Park West, this two-storey executive home offers high-quality finishes and is open and bright. The home features a spacious entry with a wide hardwood staircase, vaulted ceilings and porcelain tile. The open kitchen is well-appointed with an island, wine bar and soapstone counters. An oak staircase leads you to the upper level with four bedrooms and a full bath. The house is minutes from the highway and walking distance to schools, restaurants and shopping. Listing agent is Cheryl Jenkins with Keller Williams Select Realty, 902-403-6655.

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metro SPORTS

'I think I was already sacked': Man United manager Louis van Gaal on reports that Jose Mourinho is in line for his job

Baby Nucks face off Saturday

CANADA VS. U.S.

Virtanen meets Boeser in first game of world juniors

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

What's the point in waiting?

On Boxing Day, Team Canada will play its bitter rival the United States, as both teams begin the preliminary round of the world junior championship in Finland.

The matchup also pits prominent Vancouver Canucks prospects Jake Virtanen and Brock Boeser against each other, making for plenty of added interest for Canucks management and amateur scouting staff — not to mention the local fan base.

Virtanen, selected sixth overall in the 2014 draft and the first pick of the Jim Benning-Trevor Linden era, has played 19 games for the Canucks this season. He has one goal and four points.

But Stan Smyl, Vancouver's senior adviser to the GM, believes the grind of being a 19-year-old rookie — dealing with increased travel and not playing as many minutes (9:49 of ice time per game) compared to what he'd typically get in junior — was starting to wear on Virtanen before the Canucks lent him to Team Canada.

"We all tend to forget … that he's just 19 years old. He's a teenager, along with the pressure of being a first-rounder, being a local boy who really wants to prove himself," said Smyl in a phone interview with Metro.

"When a player at that age goes in and out of the lineup, he really wants to do well and wants to put up numbers, wants to help the team … I think it was wearing on Jake a little bit.

"Now he can go to a situation where he has the experience from last year and he's going to be able to take that experience and help with his confidence level."

Virtanen is one of four returning players to Team Canada.

On Tuesday, in Canada's final pre-tournament game, Virtanen scored twice in a wild 7-6 win over Sweden.

Selected 23rd overall by the Canucks in 2015, Brock Boeser enters the tournament for the Americans following an impressive start to his freshman year at North Dakota, with 13 goals and 21 points in 20 games.

He had goals in five straight games and points in 10 straight games prior to U.S. camp.

Smyl has watched Boeser play three times this year, with each time leaving an impression.

"Once he's comfortable with his surroundings, he really takes charge. And that's what he's done in North Dakota," said Smyl.

"And it shows on the ice."

Brock Boeser proudly wears his Vancouver Canucks colours after being drafted 23rd overall in June. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

> **Once he's comfortable with his surroundings, he really takes charge.**
> Stan Smyl, adviser to Canucks GM, on Brock Boeser

UPDATE

Czech juniors cut Jasek

Fellow Canucks prospect Lukas Jasek was part of the Czech Republic selection camp but was cut from the team prior to the start of the tournament, according to the 2016 World Junior tournament Twitter account.

Playing for Trinec Ocelari HC in the Czech Republic, Jasek has six goals and 16 points in six games of DHL Extraliga Junior competition in 2015-16, and one goal and one assist in 14 games in Extraliga competition — the top Czech league — according to the team's website.

The Canucks selected Jasek in the sixth round, 174th overall.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Jake Virtanen tucks in one of his two goals in Wednesday's world junior warm-up game against Sweden in Helsinki.
HEIKKI SAUKKOMAA/LEHTIKUVA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WORLD JUNIORS

Canada shaky in final tune-up vs. Sweden

WEDNESDAY In Helsinki

7	6
CANADA	SWEDEN

Mitch Marner scored with less than four minutes to go to cap the scoring in a wild third period, and Canada edged Sweden 7-6 Wednesday in its last exhibition match before the world junior hockey championship.

Canada led 5-1 heading into the third, before Sweden lit up Canada goaltender Mason McDonald with five goals over the final 20 minutes.

"We put ourselves in a very good position after two periods, and we just have to continue to play and have the ability to close out leads," Canada coach Dave Lowry said.

Marcus Pettersson's second goal of the period at 15:26 tied the game at 6-6 before Marner's goal salvaged the win for Canada.

McDonald, a Halifax native, recovered to make some big saves over the final minutes with Sweden pressing for the tying goal. He ended up stopping 26 of 32 shots.

"He gave us a chance," Lowry said of his goaltender. "He made saves, and he made timely saves."

Vancouver Canucks forward Jake Virtanen had two goals for the Canadians, with Dylan Strome, Mitchell Stephens, Haydn Fleury and Brendan Perlini also scoring.

Oskar Lindblom, Jacob Larsson, Axel Holmstrom and Adrian Kempe had Sweden's other goals.

Linus Soderstrom gave up five goals on 20 shots before being replaced by Erik Kallgren, who stopped five of seven shots in relief.

Canada opens its defence of the world junior title Saturday against the rival United States.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL IN BRIEF

Panthers cornerback Norman fined $26K

The NFL has fined Carolina Panthers cornerback Josh Norman $26,044 for his role in several incidents involving Odell Beckham Jr. and the Giants in Sunday's game.

Norman was fined twice Wednesday in the amounts of $17,363 and $8,681.

Norman was docked the larger amount for striking Beckham in the head and neck area. The other fine was for a facemask infraction. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beckham's suspension upheld by league

Odell Beckham Jr. is going to have to serve his one-game suspension.

Hearing officer James Thrash on Wednesday upheld the suspension for multiple violations of safety-related playing rules after hearing an appeal by the New York Giants wide receiver earlier in the day.

Beckham will miss the game Sunday night at Minnesota. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Odell Beckham Jr. GETTY IMAGES

Michael gets a look as featured back

SEAHAWKS

Team expects 2013 2nd-round pick to step up vs. St. Louis

When Christine Michael arrived back at the Seattle Seahawks' training facility last week, he was humble and quiet. He didn't speak about himself, only of the opportunity he was getting again with the team that drafted him.

Then Michael went out and made the conversation about him again. But for the first time in his professional career it was about what he accomplished on the field when he rushed for a career-high 84 yards on 16 carries in Seattle's win over Cleveland.

It was the kind of performance Seattle waited to see from Michael since he was a second-round pick by the team in 2013. But it took getting traded away to Dallas, being released by the Cowboys and later released by Washington for Michael to recognize the opportunities at a professional career were slipping away.

"(He's) very determined to be right where he's supposed to be. Not in stuff on the outside, not having too much fun with what's going on, and just being in the moment," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "His mindfulness has really shown up, trying to be there for his teammates. He demonstrated that throughout. He cherishes this opportunity more than he ever has, I think."

Michael has a chance to be the Seahawks' featured running back for the final two games of the regular season, beginning with Sunday's home finale against St. Louis. Seattle won't have Marshawn Lynch back this week from abdominal surgery, and whether he'll return for a potentially meaningless regular-season finale at Arizona is unclear.

Even when Lynch returns, assistant head coach Tom Cable said it'll be on Lynch to adjust to the type of offence the Seahawks have become late in the season.

Because of the uncertainty about Lynch, it will be up to Michael and Bryce Brown — with veteran Fred Jackson sprinkled in on third downs — to carry the load in the backfield for the rest of the regular season. Seattle is hoping what it saw from Michael against the Browns can be repeated.

"(I'm) just staying focused. Taking advantage of the opportunity and staying focused and just going out there and giving it all I have. Being patient and knowing my assignment," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

After the Seahawks traded him, Christine Michael spent time with the Cowboys and Redskins before returning to Seattle. GETTY IMAGES FILE

> **He kind of had a fierceness to him in that game, and that was something I liked to see.**
> Seattle offensive co-ordinator Darrell Bevell

NBA

Dirk now sixth in all-time scoring

Dirk Nowitzki has moved ahead of Shaquille O'Neal into sixth place on the NBA's career scoring list.

Nowitzki made a jumper with 9:51 left in the second quarter of the Dallas Mavericks' game in Brooklyn on Wednesday night to pass O'Neal. Nowitzki finished with 22 points, making the go-ahead basket with 19.2 seconds left in overtime in Dallas' 119-118 victory over the Nets, to push his total to 22,609.

O'Neal had 28,596 in his career and is a candidate for induction into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016. Wilt Chamberlain is fifth with 31,419 points.

Nowitzki is eighth on the combined NBA-ABA list, behind No. 6 Julius Erving and No. 7 Moses Malone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dirk Nowitzki GETTY IMAGES

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RECIPE Sweet Potato and Split Pea Soup

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This simple, hearty soup is packed with as much nutrition as it is with comfort factor.

Ready in
Prep time: 1 hour 15 minutes
Serves 6

Ingredients
- 8 1/2 cups water
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 cup dried yellow split peas
- 1 Tbsp freshly grated ginger
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp toasted pumpkin seeds

Directions
1. Place a large sauce pan over medium heat and fill with 1/2 cup water and onion, allow to cook until onions are translucent. Add ginger and simmer for 2 minutes. Add remaining 8 cups of water, sweet potato and peas to pot and bring to a boil.
2. After a few minutes, reduce the temperature and cover soup. Allow to simmer for 1 hour, or until the sweet potatoes and tender.
3. In that same bowl, toss your shrimp with the other half of the marinade. When the broccoli has been in the oven for 10 minutes, take out the sheets, turn the broccoli over and add the shrimp evenly across the two sheets. Put it all back in the oven for another 10 minutes.
4. Allow to soup to simmer last 10 minutes uncovered. Working in batches, put soup in a food processor and purée. Garnish with pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds.

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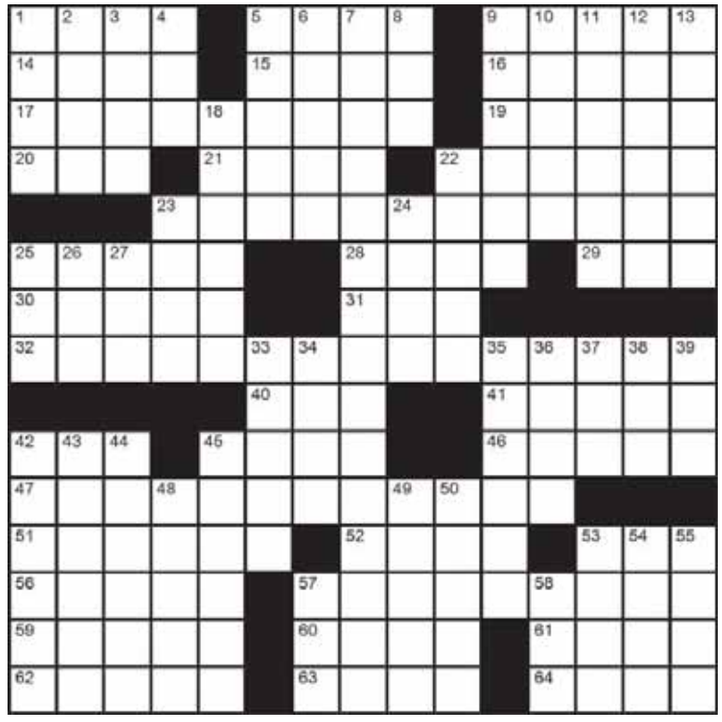
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. "__ Is Christmas": Festive tune by #59-Across
5. Ancient's 1601
9. Monastery boss
14. Comical "Ouches!"
15. Egg: French
16. Bellows
17. The __, "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (1989) family
19. 'Madame' of chemistry
20. Canuck prov.
21. Carried
22. Brightly-plumed bird
23. "Glory to the newborn King!" exclaimers: 2 wds.
25. Eternal City's ancient inhabitant
28. Lively
29. Socialite's 'born'
30. Moon shape, e.g.
31. Indonesia's __ Islands
32. When many might still be shopping for Christmas gifts: 4 wds.
40. "__ little teapot..."
41. Raised flatlands
42. Sit-ups targets
45. Util. bill
46. Friends, slangly
47. NORAD service monitoring the progress of Rudolph and the gang on Christmas eve: 2 wds.
51. Baking... All-purpose and multigrain
52. Canadian rocker Mr. Kroeger
53. Gunk
56. Decorate
57. "We Three Kings of Orient Are"... "Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying / Sealed in the __-__ tomb."
59. Canadian singer/songwriter Ms. McNeil
60. Canadian actor Mr. Cronyn
61. Tilled
62. Be popular on Twitter
63. Mail org. in The States
64. Hubbubs

DOWN
1. "Is that for here or __ __?" (Fast food query)
2. Highway honker
3. "Don't know __ __ matters, but..."
4. Leaky balloon sound effect
5. Communicating cow
6. __ Falls (High waterfall on Vancouver Island)
7. "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch"... "You're as __ __ __ / You're as charming as an eel..."
8. Perhaps-es
9. Esoteric
10. Old 'town' in France
11. Like the wilderness
12. Baltimore baseball player
13. Dangerous flying bug
18. Wherefrom
22. Bit of drumming in "The Little Drummer Boy": 2 wds.
23. Jumble
24. Pub game prop
25. TV brand
26. Christmas dinner fragment
27. Converged
33. Lively rhythms
34. Canadian's continental neighbour, briefly
35. Hold back
36. Not ever, poetically
37. Employ
38. Dance style
39. 'Count' suffix
42. Of equal quickness: 2 wds.
43. Town in southern Manitoba named after one of Norse deity Odin's sons
44. Alarm clock button
45. Made money
48. Burial shroud city in Italy
49. Eat loudly
50. Surnamesakes of Orson Welles' most famous role
53. Fine
54. Butter substitute
55. Gambler's chances
57. Moo __ pork (Takeout dish)
58. "__-ching!"

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You need to make a bold decision and choose between one approach or another. The only danger is that your emotions will guide you instead of reason. Think before you act.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
It's not a good time for taking risks, so don't be tempted to gamble, even if the odds are in your favour. Travel plans, too, are likely to be disrupted, so unless you must be on the move it might be wise to stay at home.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You may go over the top if you think you are being cheated out of what you deserve. Before you start firing off accusations make sure you've got the evidence to back them up.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
An emotional looking full moon in your sign over the next 48 hours means you can't trust your feelings. Refuse to get upset no matter the provocation. How you react matters.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Something will disrupt your schedule. But why should that worry you? Relax. Slow down. Take it easy for a while. Save your energy for a time when you can make things happen.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The current cosmic set-up is more than a little misleading, so don't jump to conclusions and don't launch into a tirade against someone you think does not appreciate you. They'll soon be singing your praises.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Making changes should be easy, but because the current full moon cuts across such an important axis of your chart you must make sure it's what you really want. You won't be able to change back again later.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
There is no point trying to keep feelings to yourself because you won't be able to. Be open about the way that you feel. If you bottle up your emotions they could explode later.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If someone is giving you a hard time, remove yourself from their presence before you do something that will make matters worse. Don't put up with immature behaviour.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Everything that needs to happen will happen when the time is right. Others will be rushing here, there and everywhere in an effort to get on top of things, but you don't have to.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a time more for thinking than for doing, so resist the urge to start something new and instead of wasting time on trivial and frivolous people, spend some quality time with your thoughts.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You may want to end a relationship but first try looking forward and asking yourself if you may later decide that you were too hasty. Full moons can play all sorts of tricks on people.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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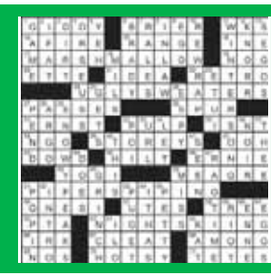

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